Responsibilities for Implementation of Family-School Compacts

California Department of Education's Responsibilities

Schools and districts participating in the Challenge School Districts Initiative that request assistance in implementing comprehensive family-involvement efforts and compacts will receive technical assistance and consultation. This guide provides information about family-school compacts for districts and schools that must adopt compacts as a result of Improving America's Schools Act, Title I, or choose to do so because of a new state law (AB 1334, Chapter 485, Statutes of 1995). The new state law requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to promote the use of and disseminate information to schools and districts about model family-school compacts.

To identify and disseminate effective practices, the CDE will review (1) information provided by the districts about the processes that were developed and used at the school-site level to adopt family-school compacts and comprehensive partnership efforts; and (2) samples of family-school compacts being used by schools. However, the ultimate determinant of the success of family-school partnerships and compacts will be in the results of improved student performance.

Challenge School District's Responsibilities

It is the district's responsibility to welcome parents as full partners into the educational process and to promote and establish family-school partnerships that support student learning. Because family-school compacts are a strategy to promote such partnerships and improve student performance, the district will assist school sites in jointly adopting with their families and communities compacts that describe how families and school staff will help each student receive a high-quality education. Families, teachers, administrators, and students resolve to work together through a compact with each student's family. Each party to the compact will identify specific activities to promote the student's learning. The school district will have the primary responsibility for evaluating the extent to which schools have met the intent and purpose of the compacts in forging family-school partnerships and supporting student learning.

Development of Family-School Compacts

Family-school compacts should be developed by a representative team of families, school staff, and community members to reflect the vision, mission, and goals for students at each school. One way to develop effective family-school compacts is to look at compacts that have been used or are being used successfully in other schools. Appendix I includes three compacts that were adopted by the California State Board of Education in January, 1997, to meet the intent of AB 1334 and which could be used at an elementary, middle, or high school level. Appendix II contains several examples of compacts currently in use that respond to each local school's agreed upon roles that parents and the school will carry out in support of a student's education. Descriptions of each of these compacts follow.

Elementary School Compacts

Barbara Comstock Morse Elementary School

This is an example of how a compact and a student learning plan can come together. The school strongly encourages parents to provide 36 hours of support a year to their child's education. The compact includes a form that offers families a variety of activities

that can be selected in order to fulfill the commitment of 36 hours. The learning plan and compact are signed and agreed upon during face-to-face sessions that include the parent, teacher, and student. The compact establishes high expectations without sounding overly directive. An attractive feature is the open-ended component: "Any other activities that the parent feels are important to support learning."

Leonardo da Vinci Magnet School (K–8)

This compact is an example of one that is mailed home for the parent's and student's signatures. The compact includes the form on which the parent is to record the hours he or she contributes each month. Notice that the total yearly number of hours is 40 for one child and 45 for two children. The school has a parent coordinator who keeps track of hours, among other duties. Also note that the hours can be fulfilled by any member of the family, or another designated person, who is over the age of sixteen years.

South Bay Union School District

This compact is interesting because it goes beyond what is normally viewed as a compact. The district guarantees to the parent that every child will be reading at grade level by the end of the second grade. The district agrees to provide tutoring services and other supplementary services in the third grade if that goal is not met. In return, parents of all students in kindergarten and grades one and two sign an agreement that, for example, the student will not have more than ten absences or tardies and will read every night. The parent's and student's activities are verified by the classroom teacher. This compact is unusual because it emphasizes performance in only one area—reading.

Turnbull Learning Academy (K–8)

The partners in this compact are the family and school, and the compact is signed by the principal and the parent or guardian. The compact is succinct and is attractively laid out. The components listed in the school section establish a positive and supportive tone. Parents have to complete at least 18 partnership points each month at this public magnet school. The accompanying reporting form is interesting because, at least for the month of September, the school is very specific in the points that will be counted. Note the uncommon feature that requires parents to attend "back-to-school night" and "literacy night."

Middle Grades Compact

Luther Burbank Middle School

This compact includes administrators, the faculty chairperson, parents, and students as partners who agree on what each will contribute to support the student's educational program. The compact is translated into Spanish on the reverse side. Some positive features include the administrative responsibility to publicly recognize students who succeed in meeting goals; and the commitment to provide support for those students who need special assistance.

High School Compact

Casa Roble Fundamental High School

Two interesting features of this compact at a magnet high school are the student requirements to complete a senior project for graduation and to participate in an extracurricular activity. The parent-volunteer form lists a wide assortment of ways that parents can meet their volunteer obligation each term on an honor system of reporting.

Generic Compacts

California State PTA

This compact is nicely laid out, attractive, and succinct. It designates students, parents, teachers, and the principal or administrator as partners. The compact identifies equal numbers of responsibilities for each of the partners. The compact is certainly appropriate for elementary schools; changes might be made to accommodate conditions for middle and high school students.

San Diego City Schools

This compact, developed for the purpose of meeting Title I and district requirements, is intended to be used at both elementary and secondary levels. Although somewhat longer than other compacts, it does emphasize most of the parental and school roles that the research indicates are important for students' success.

Special Populations

Nonwritten Compact

A process is suggested for collecting information orally from parents who prefer oral communication to written documents. After the information is gathered, it can be incorporated into a written document.

Research Supporting the Benefits of Family-School Partnerships

In general, the most effective efforts to involve families are long lasting, well planned, and comprehensive and offer parents and school staff a variety of ways in which both can contribute to the successful schooling of children. By exchanging information, sharing in decision making, working together at school and at home to support learning, collaborating with community services in support of families, and becoming informed about how best to contribute to the growth and development of students, parents and teachers can become partners in the educational process. Research indicates that when families and schools cooperate in the education of children, students do better in school and the schools are better (*A New Generation of Evidence,* 1994). In fact, the most accurate predictor of student success in school is not income or social status but the extent to which families and schools encourage learning and high expectations and together support the student's education.

Some of the benefits for students, families, and schools when families and schools work together are as follows:

For students,

- Higher grades and test scores
- Better attendance
- Completion of more homework
- Higher graduation rates
- More positive attitudes and behavior
- Preparation for work and careers
- Greater enrollment in postsecondary education

For families,

- More confidence in schools
- More self-confidence in the ability to help children
- More confidence in the family
- A commitment to lifelong learning
- Advocacy for the child

For schools,

- Higher student achievement
- More support from families and the community
- Better reputation of the schools
- Improved teacher morale
- Safer schools

Parental Involvement Laws, Requirements, and Initiatives

Some of the federal and state laws or initiatives which require or promote increased family-school partnerships include the following:

- Schools that participate in the School Improvement Program (AB 65, Statutes of 1977) must establish school site councils made up of equal numbers of school staff and parents to make decisions about the school program.
- The Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994, which reauthorized federal Title I programs, such as Even Start, Migrant Education, American Indian Education, and Bilingual Education, requires all schools that receive Title I funds to develop family-school compacts and adopt parental involvement policies at the school site and district levels.
- Goals 2000 federal legislation identifies increased parental involvement in education as one of eight voluntary national goals for all schools.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and California Master Plan for Special Education require and promote parental involvement that incorporates an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

- Current state law (AB 322, Statutes of 1990) requires every school board to adopt a policy on parental involvement and to develop school-level plans if their district receives School Improvement, Economic Impact Aid (EIA), and Title I funds.
- Most recently, a new law signed by Governor Wilson (AB 1334, Chapter 485, Statutes of 1995) requires the state superintendent of public instruction, in consultation with the State Board of Education, to develop model family-school compacts by January, 1997, and to promote their use by districts and schools.
- Partnerships with families are emphasized in all the major state educational reform efforts, such as SB 1274 School Restructuring; SB 620 Healthy Start; the grade-level reform documents *Here They Come: Ready or Not, It's Elementary, Caught in the Middle,* and *Second to None;* the Challenge Initiative; and the Reading and Mathematics Task Force Initiatives.
- The Family-School Partnership Act (Chapter 1290, Statutes of 1994) allows parents to take off up to 40 hours from work each school year to participate in their child's school activities.
- A State Policy on Parent Involvement adopted by the State Board of Education in 1989 and revised in 1994 recommends that each school undertake a comprehensive home-school partnership effort based on six roles that parents can play in their children's education.
- The *California Strategic Plan for Parental Involvement in Education*, developed and published by the CDE in 1992, includes recommendations for transforming schools through family-school-community partnerships.
- Parental involvement is one of the criteria that are used to identify distinguished schools in the California School Recognition Program. Schools must describe the strategies and activities they use to ensure that parents are collaborative partners in the education of their children.
- The review processes that all elementary schools receiving categorical program funds (Program Quality Review) and all secondary schools (Focus on Learning) in California undergo periodically to determine the quality and effectiveness of their educational programs specify that the quality of family-school collaborative efforts be evaluated.

Note: See Appendix III for copies of several of these documents.

Questions and Answers

What is the purpose of a family-school compact?

A compact is a voluntary agreement that outlines how a family and school will share responsibility for a student's education. From a school's perspective, compacts are a concrete way to engage families, welcome them as partners, and formalize the important role that families play in the education of their children. From a parent's perspective, compacts can be a way to validate the support that all families already provide for their children as well as a way to identify new possibilities for joint activities between the home and school that will contribute to a student's success in school and the future. Compacts are most successful when they are jointly developed by families and school staff and are effective tools for establishing two-way communication and collaboration between a school and family about a student's educational strengths and needs. Although a compact most often is a written document, it may be developed through nonwritten means, such as oral interviews and/or taped agreements, with families who may prefer an alternative to a written agreement.

Who is involved in a compact?

Compacts identify how parents, students, teachers, and administrators will work together to support student learning. Some schools also provide for community and business participation in compacts. Involvement by all these key partners in a team that develops a family-school compact is central to obtaining widespread support. Students can become increasingly more involved in deciding the content of the compact as they progress through the grades. Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), Title I, requires

that compacts be jointly developed with parents and that compacts address, at a minimum, family, school, and student roles in supporting improved student achievement.

What might a family-school compact look like?

Family-school compacts should be jointly designed by families, school staff, students, and community members to fit the vision and mission of a quality educational program for students at each local school. A school may want to consider different types of compacts and procedures for elementary, middle, and high school students as well as for students in alternative educational programs, students receiving special education services, or families who may prefer an alternative to a written agreement. Agreements may contain sections that allow families and students to negotiate and personalize the contributions that each family or student will make to the student's education.

Although not exclusive sources of information, federal and state laws provide some guidance to the content of compacts. Both IASA, Title I, and state laws identify school staff, parents, and students as the key parties in a compact. Title I further requires compacts to affirm the school's responsibility to provide all students with a high-quality curricular and instructional program and an effective learning environment to enable students to meet the state's student performance standards. At least one parent-teacher conference is required by Title I at the elementary level. The parent-teacher conferences could be used to explain and discuss the compacts with parents. State laws support and federal laws require identification of activities that parents and schools will use to encourage children's learning, including:

- Monitoring of student attendance
- Supervision of homework and television viewing
- Two-way communication about a child's progress in school, including frequent reports to parents
- Volunteering in the classroom, at school events, and, in other ways, at the school
- Participation in significant decision making at the school
- Reasonable access by parents to school staff and observation of classroom activities

What is the relationship between a student learning plan and a family-school compact?

A student learning plan, jointly developed by a student, teacher, and parent(s), generally describes a student's course of study and activities at a school and the progress being made by the student in those studies in relation to grade-level expectations, content and performance standards, and assessments. The family-school compact describes how the student, teacher, and parent will support the educational program described in the learning plan to ensure student success. Student learning plans, together with compacts, are a way for families to identify educational goals for their children, monitor their children's studies, evaluate the progress of schools in educating their children, and identify how they will support their children's education. Ideally, the student learning plan and compact should be considered complementary parts of the joint planning between families and schools of a student's educational program.

How is a compact to be developed?

Compacts are most effective when they are jointly developed at the local level with those persons that are going to be affected by the compact. Therefore, it is important to consider ways in which families, students, teachers, administrators, and other school staff can fully participate together in determining the purpose, format, and content of the compacts. The following steps may be considered in developing a compact or compacts for your school:

Step 1: Form a joint working group.

An existing, expanded, or new school committee may be appropriate as long as the committee has broad representation and all the parties (parents, teachers, administrators, and students) to a compact are represented. It is also important to ensure that the parent and student members are representative of the various backgrounds of the families being served by the school, including the diversity of racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, language, and disability backgrounds and educational needs of students. A good question that the group members might ask themselves periodically is—Who else needs to be represented in this group? Special attempts should be made to engage parents of students from all grade levels, including Head Start and preschool parents and

those who often have not become involved in school activities. The principal or group may also recruit and select individuals with special leadership skills or experiences that can facilitate the process of development of the compact. It may also be appropriate to invite organizations in the community that support and provide services to families and children.

Step 2: Clarify the committee's role.

It is helpful if members of the committee have a clear understanding of their task. Consensus should be reached by the group on their responsibilities and on the procedure for sharing ideas and opinions. The committee should also consider how ongoing communication will occur between the committee and the school staff, students, families, and, possibly, community members as the compact is being developed and once a proposed compact is agreed upon.

Step 3: Provide training for committee members and the community.

The principal or his or her designee may want to arrange training for the committee on the research that links family-school partnerships and increased student achievement and federal and state legal requirements for parental involvement and compacts. It may be useful to share this information with the larger school community and families as well. A key discussion for the committee is the school's learning goals and/or content and performance standards for students and how the compact will support the attainment of the standards. The committee members can review samples of family-school compacts being used by other schools.

Step 4: Solicit ongoing public input, review, and dissemination.

The committee may want to implement the procedures outlined in Step 2 for eliciting feedback on the proposed compact from parents, teachers, students, school staff, and other community members before, during, and after the final adoption of a compact(s). You may want to publicize the development of the compact in appropriate languages in the school and parent newsletters before and after adoption. You may also want to present the proposed compact at a variety of locations and times, including PTA meetings, advisory committee meetings, homes of parents, or special meetings in the community organized to gather input.

Step 5: Assess the strengths and needs of family-school partnerships.

The committee may decide to examine current practices or policies in the school or district that support parental involvement to ensure congruence with and support for the family-school compact. For example, there may be a need to establish or update a policy on parental involvement. State law requires the adoption of a district level parent involvement policy, and IASA, Title I, requires the adoption of both a district and site level parent involvement policy. Information can be gathered from parents, students, and teachers about parental involvement in their schools or about family-school compacts specifically. This information can help to identify barriers to family-school partnerships and ways to alleviate or remove the barriers.

Information from parents should be gathered through a variety of ways, including written surveys and oral interviews in appropriate home languages. Site visits to schools that already have compacts in place may also be made. This information is likely to shape the content of the compact. For example, the committee may recommend a very detailed compact that will be used by all parents, a choice of several compacts to meet family needs, or an open-ended agreement that allows for individualization.

Step 6: Draft a sample compact.

Review the facts and information that have been gathered. Reach consensus on the content of the compact(s). The committee may also include recommendations for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating compacts.

Step 7: Review the appropriateness of the proposed compact.

There are federal and state laws regarding parental involvement programs and policies (see question 3). If your school receives IASA, Title I, funds, specific requirements for compacts apply (see Appendix III, "Miscellaneous Documents." Some key questions to ask are the following:

- Does the compact meet the intent of the district's and school's policy on parental involvement?
- If your school receives Title I monies, does the compact meet the requirements of federal law? Has a compact been adopted for all parents or Title I parents only?
- Does the compact support the school's goals for students and the content and performance standards?

- Does your school's compact need approval by the local school board?
- Does the compact take into consideration the strengths and needs of parents and/or students who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English fluency, have limited literacy skills, or are of diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds?

Step 8: Develop a plan for implementing the compact.

Once your school has adopted a compact or compacts, there are many ways to implement them. Remember that compacts are voluntary on the part of families. However, schools that have had compacts for several years report an overall enthusiastic and positive response from families to participation in compacts. In the few cases where families have reservations about compacts, schools have successfully reached agreement on the content of compacts through face-to-face meetings that allow each family to identify activities which they are willing to do to support their child.

Ideally, you might want to consider discussing the compact and the student learning plan with parents at the same time. Some schools schedule individual parent-teacher conferences or small-group sessions for parents to discuss and explain the student learning plans and compacts before the agreements are signed. Some schools may want to discuss the compact during a regularly scheduled meeting for students participating in special education programs and services. Other schools mail the compacts to families and ask them to sign and return the agreements. Compacts in nonwritten formats are likely to increase the effectiveness of the compact process for parents who prefer an oral rather than a written format. Schools receiving Title I funds are required to have at least one annual parent-teacher conference at the elementary level. At the secondary level, where the scheduling of parent-teacher conferences may be more problematic, some high schools hold parent-teacher conferences on Saturdays to encourage greater student and parent participation.

It is also important to provide training to school staff, students, and parents on the purpose of the compacts, the role of family and school in supporting student success, and the desired results of the compacts and how those results will be achieved. For example, the compacts may be a strategy for improving student attendance, reducing school violence, and improving student performance. If there is a school/community liaison, he or she may be instrumental in carrying out the training process and assisting with follow-up.

The training could be done with videotapes showing a group of parents or a parent and a teacher discussing a compact. You might also ask parents who have been trained to present the information to other families as a way of modeling a meaningful school role for parents. The training is also an opportunity to explain the school's broader goals and specific activities in promoting family-school partnerships and the role of compacts within that broader context.

What role do family-school compacts play in a school's overall effort to increase family involvement in the education of children?

The research (Epstein, 1995) indicates—and the California State Board of Education Policy on Parent Involvement incorporates the finding—that there are six key roles by which parents, teachers, and other school staff can support student learning:

- Parents and educators learn how to support a child's growth and development and academic success in school through participation in parenting education classes and through interaction with families being served by the school.
- Parents and educators participate in an ongoing two-way communication between the home and the school about the student's academic progress, school curriculum, and school programs.
- Parents volunteer in the school or community in activities that extend and support students' learning, and educators learn how to use volunteers effectively to support teaching and learning.
- Parents work with children at home to support the curriculum of the school, including supervising homework, and teachers support and help parents with ideas on how to work with their children at home in specific subject areas.
- Parents and educators cooperate in decision making about a school's overall educational program and services to students.
- Parents and educators collaborate with the community to secure needed services for families and school programs.

In general, effective efforts to involve families are long lasting, well planned, and comprehensive in that they offer and support parents in the variety of roles mentioned above. Successful schools routinely and systematically involve families in designing and carrying out the school's vision for students in the development of content and performance standards at each grade level, and in examining the progress toward meeting the vision and standards.

Teachers, families, other school staff and members of the community regularly and formally participate in both decision making and the substantive work of the school. Schools that already offer families a variety of ways to contribute to their children's education may view the family-school compact as a concrete commitment to work together and as a natural culmination of ongoing partnerships with parents. Schools that do not have extensive participation by parents can use compacts to begin a dialogue with parents about ways in which both the family and school can support student success in school, eventually leading to support of all six key roles.

Initially, the Superintendent's Challenge School Districts Initiative mentioned that parents should devote ten hours a week to help their children with school activities and the supervision of homework. Should families devote ten hours a week for each child?

Ten hours a week is a goal that families can work toward in supporting their children's education and successful growth and development if they so wish. Everyone is aware that family life in America has changed. The presence of a parent or other caregiving adult in the home during the day is no longer the norm. Most children and young adolescents today are raised by a single parent or in a two-parent household in which both parents work and are away from home during the weekdays. The result for adolescents, according to a recent study by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, is that they spend little time with parents and other family members, except during meals or television watching. The study found that adolescents spend an average of five minutes a day exclusively with their fathers and about twenty minutes a day with their mothers. Today's parents clearly have other commitments that compete for their time.

At the same time research shows that students do best in school when families are involved in advocating for and supporting their children's education both at home and at school (*A New Generation of Evidence*, 1994). Positive results are achieved when families spend more time interacting, monitoring, or supervising their children's time in and out of school. Likewise, student performance will be enhanced when schools work with families to facilitate greater involvement by (1) providing ways for parents to stay in contact with their child's school beyond regular school hours; (2) providing training for families and teachers on how to work together effectively; and (3) assisting all families with ideas and

avenues for supporting their children's education at home and at school (Comer and Haynes, 1991). For example, voice-mail systems at the school allow parents to stay up-to-date on school and classroom information and to express their ideas, suggestions, concerns, and questions. Models of interaction based on parent-to-parent support groups are also successful.

Herbert Wahlberg, a professor and researcher at the University of Illinois, has found overwhelming evidence that the way in which families interact with their children at home is a key factor in students' achievement. In fact, what parents do with their children is twice as great a predictor of children's school performance as is the family's social or economic status. Dr. Wahlberg and other researchers have suggested that the following activities can help children the most:

- Talk with your child about school and everyday events.
- Monitor the amount and quality of television your child watches.
- Establish a schedule with your child for study time and homework.
- Monitor peer activities and use of out-of-school time.
- Express interest in and monitor your child's academic progress in school and your child's growth as an individual.

In addition, Reginald Clark, another researcher who studied family-child interactions in households that had academically successful students, found that a schedule of balanced activities for students works best. As a parent, guardian, or family member, you more than likely already interact at least ten hours a week with your child in supervising and/or helping your child to organize his or her time to accommodate 25–35 hours of weekly activities, such as:

- Chores and errands (1–2 hours)
- Talking with parents, family members, and other adults (5–6 hours)
- Personal writing (2–3 hours)
- Homework and study (4–8 hours)
- Participation in hobbies, supervised club activities, cultural events, physical exercise, and planned family outings (6–12 hours)
- Leisure reading (4–6 hours)
- Health and personal hygiene (3–4 hours)

Dr. Clark found that, in addition to these activities, students devoted 20–30 hours a week to socializing informally with siblings

or peers and spending time alone; watching television and listening to music or the radio; daydreaming, thinking, meditating, and praying; and resting, napping, and eating.

Families can also support their children's and other students' education by volunteering at the school, participating in decision-making and governance councils, and collaborating with the community to bring additional services to children and families.

Can parents be obligated to contribute a specific number of hours a week, a semester, or a year to their children's education? Can the hours be monitored? Can there be consequences for parents not contributing a set number of hours?

The goal of increased family-school partnerships is to improve student learning and schools, not to monitor or police the increased collaboration. The decisions regarding whether to commit parents to contributing a set number of hours, the means of monitoring the hours, and the consequences of nonparticipation by parents, should be made by the parents, students, teachers, and administrators at each school site. It is clear that the success of compacts, for example, depends on the extent to which staff and families believe in the concept and ultimately use and adhere to the responsibilities outlined in the agreement. It is easier to get widespread support if the families and school staff have been part of the compact development team from the onset. It is important to recognize the contributions that parents make and the time that they already spend in support of their children. The committees developing the compacts should consider rewarding parents, teachers, and students for what they already do and for the important steps that they take in bettering what they already do.

Currently, there are some schools in California, especially magnet or specialized program schools, that ask parents to sign family-school compacts and spend a specified number of hours participating in their children's education. Some charter schools, for example, require the fulfillment of these responsibilities as a condition of enrollment of their children in the school. In addition, parents may be responsible for self-reporting and/or submitting forms to the school that document activities and hours of participation. (See Appendixes I and II for sample compacts and examples of reporting forms.) Schools that monitor parental participation to that extent often have liaisons on staff to coordinate the reporting requirements and overall parental involvement efforts.

Resources

Publications

America Goes Back to School: A Place for Families and the Community. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Education (1-800-USA-LEARN), 1995.

The sponsor of this publication is the Family Involvement Partnership for Learning, a coalition of 140 family, school, community, religious, and business organizations dedicated to supporting family involvement in children's learning through school and community partnerships. The book is organized to address the issues that Americans say they want their schools to address, such as connecting young people to real-life skills, helping children to learn the basics and core academic subjects, making college more accessible, and so forth. Each section describes key facts pertaining to the issue, suggested activities (for families, schools, and communities), and sources of additional information and resources.

Berla, Nancy; Jocelyn Garlington; and Anne T. Henderson. *Taking Stock: The Inventory of Family, Community, and School Support for Student Achievement*. Washington, D.C.: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1993.

For schools and communities that share a commitment to establish closer working partnerships, *Taking Stock* provides a simple, practical tool to look at efforts to work together and a set of resources to help develop more extensive, creative, and responsive strategies for collaboration. The manual helps a school to assess how well it is reaching out and working with its community and shows how to use the results to develop a detailed action plan for improvement. Questionnaires, scoring information (including an optional software package for scoring), and a bibliography are included.

Berla, Nancy; Anne T. Henderson; and William Kerewsky. *The Middle School Years: A Successful Parent's Handbook*. Columbia, Md.: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1990.

The handbook suggests ways in which parents can help improve the achievement of their middle school–age children. Included are a general introduction on how children ten to fourteen years old develop; suggestions on how parents can help their adolescent children reach their potential; and ways to evaluate and work to improve their child's middle school.

California Strategic Plan for Parental Involvement in Education. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1992.

The California Department of Education developed this document to help schools and districts implement effective and comprehensive parental involvement efforts. The document presents a research-based framework for developing effective partnerships with parents.

Carroll, Susan Rovezzi, and David Carroll. *How Smart Schools Get and Keep Community Support*. Bloomington, Ind.: National Educational Service, 1994.

This book helps teachers, administrators, and educators to respond to the challenge of creating public support for education in a climate that is increasingly hostile toward public schools. The authors offer a wealth of practical strategies to help educators develop strong allies in the community by adopting a customer orientation, including overcoming the objections of parent and community groups to activities and curricula in schools; using surveys, focus groups, and demographic studies to find out what parents and communities want and need; keeping the public informed of school events, issues, and achievements; involving the entire staff in strengthening the school's image; and using the school's database, program evaluation, and the media to secure public support.

Comer, James P., and Norris M. Haynes. "Parent Involvement in Schools: An Ecological Approach," *The Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 91, No. 3 (1991).

In Comer's school development program, parents are involved at all levels of school life through general support of a school's educational programs and active participation in daily activities and in school planning and management. Parents work together with school staff to establish academic and social goals and to develop and implement comprehensive school plans. Parents do not supersede or challenge the authority of principals and their staffs. They provide perspectives on matters that serve the best interests of children. Parental involvement programs that are instituted in traditional bureaucratic and inflexible

school environments are less likely to yield positive results than those that are a part of a more collaborative organizational structure.

Edge, Denzil, and Diane Talley Davis. "Inclusion of Parents and Families of Children with Disabilities in the Education Process: Issues, Concerns, and Paradigm Shifts," *South Atlantic Regional Resource Center Reports* (September, 1994).

The article discusses societal changes affecting families, barriers to involvement, changes in the definition of parental involvement, and principles for involving families in the education of their children with disabilities.

Employers, Families, and Education: Promoting Family Involvement in Learning. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Education, 1995.

This booklet describes three major ways that employers are promoting home-school-workplace partnerships: by promoting and instituting programs and policies that encourage employees to get involved in their children's education; by developing and maintaining programs and policies to improve child care and schools in their community; and by assisting schools and child care centers in the development of programs and policies that promote family involvement.

Epstein, Joyce. "School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share," *Phi Delta Kappan* (May, 1995), 701–712.

Joyce Epstein, arguably the foremost researcher in parental involvement in the nation, summarizes the theory, framework, and guidelines that can assist schools in building effective family-school-community partnerships.

"Getting Parents Involved," *The Education Digest*, Vol. 58, No. 8 (April, 1993).

The focus of this issue of *The Education Digest* is on motivating disengaged, at-risk, and uninvolved parents to become involved in the education of their children. The conclusion reached is that the most effective way to reach these parents is also the most costly and time-consuming: repeated individual contact.

Henderson, Anne T.; Carl L. Marburger; and Theodora Ooms. *Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide to Working with Parents*. Columbia, Md.: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1986.

The authors address the whys and hows of developing positive home-school relations. They know and show that parents can and do make a difference in promoting the positive aspects of effective schools. Parents are challenged to be involved, and school staff are challenged to nurture family-school partnerships.

McCaleb, Sudia Paloma. *Building Communities of Learners: A Collaboration Among Teachers, Students, Families, and Community*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

The primary strengths of this book are the stories of the parents, the participatory approach, and alternative possibilities to traditional schooling processes. It is easy to read and has practical suggestions for involving culturally diverse parents.

A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement. Edited by Anne T. Henderson and Nancy Berla. Columbia, Md.: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1994.

Sixty-six research studies on parental involvement are meticulously and impressively described and analyzed. The book presents, in a readable and succinct fashion, incontrovertible evidence of the importance of family-school partnerships in supporting student success in school.

Open the Schoolhouse Doors: A Parent-Community Action Project. Los Angeles: California Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students, California State PTA, 1995.

The primary goal of this publication is to help parents to become confident activists on behalf of their children and to be catalysts for change and improvement in their local schools. The manual stresses cooperation and collaboration among all interested parties as a way to achieve education reform. A basic premise of the manual is that the changes necessary to create a true student-focused public school system can come only through parents and community members acting together to hold the schools accountable for student performance. The manual presents a process for assessing the effectiveness of schools and contains excellent resource materials.

Organizing a Successful Parent Center: A Guide and Resource. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1994.

This booklet helps school staff, parents, and community leaders understand how parent centers can promote family involvement and strengthen their schools. It also serves as a guide to establishing parent centers.

Otterbourg, Susan. *The Education Today Parent Involvement Handbook*. Boston: The Educational Publishing Group, 1994.

This handbook has ideas for parents of children of all ages. It explains why parents should be involved in their children's education and provides strategies for improving home learning. The home-school communication checklist and information about parent conferences are especially helpful.

"Parent Involvement in Schools," *EdSource Report* (September, 1994).

This publication provides an excellent analysis of the state of parental involvement in California schools. Although there is overwhelming consensus on the importance of parental involvement in education, a tremendous gap between policy and practice exists. New directions for alleviating the current state are suggested.

Parents as Partners: Planning Early for Your Children's School Success and College Education. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 1995.

This booklet focuses on the crucial role that parents play in determining the success of their children in school. Practical and realistic suggestions are made to help parents become more involved in their children's schools and to ensure that the home environment is conducive to learning. The booklet also identifies the core high school graduation requirements and encourages parents to learn about California's colleges and universities, the entrance requirements of each, and the financial aid opportunities available.

Parents Empowering Parents: The California State PTA Parent Education Manual. Los Angeles: California State PTA, 1991.

This manual was designed to support parents by giving them information, strategies, and leadership skills to build strong home-school partnerships; to assist parents with techniques to use in supporting their children's education; and to enhance parents' skills in working with their own children. The California State PTA has also published a Spanish-language edition.

Rioux, William J., and Nancy Berla. *Innovations in Parent and Family Involvement*. Princeton Junction, N.J.: Eye on America, 1993.

This book contains the results of a national search for exemplary parent and family involvement programs for diverse populations from prekindergarten through high school. It provides strategies and tips for planning and implementing family-school partnerships. Examples of successful programs with Native American, Latino, and African-American families are featured.

Rogers, Margot. *Planning for Title I Programs: Guidelines for Parents, Advocates, and Educators*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Education, 1995.

This document presents general information about Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) in a reader-friendly manner. The roles of state agencies, local educational agencies, schools, and parents are described. A section is dedicated to strategies for reaching, assisting, and training parents. A list of local and national organizations that parents can turn to for help is provided.

Rothenberg, B. Annye. *Understanding and Working with Parents and Children from Rural Mexico*. Menlo Park, Calif.: The CHC Center for Child and Family Development Press, 1995.

Twenty-seven Latino professionals in the health, social services, and education fields come together to discuss the child-rearing, school experience, and health care concerns of rural Mexican families in the United States. The author provides a historical and sociocultural understanding of this population and addresses the practical issues for child development professionals: family structure and values, marriage, adolescence, pregnancy, infant care, the role of the church, views on special education, and family involvement in education. The reader will come to understand and appreciate the struggles, the confusion, and the isolation of acculturation and assimilation of the families and students of many of California's schools.

The Schools We Need Now: Action and Information for Parents, Families, and Communities in School Restructuring. San Francisco: California Tomorrow, 1994.

This document is an informative resource for parents, parent advocates, and community members who wish to participate in, and have an impact on, school restructuring or school improvement initiatives in their communities. It examines issues of inequities and discrimination based on race, income, or national origin and identifies questions to be raised by parents and community advocates as they participate in charting the course of school reform in their communities. The document places issues of school reform in context by providing a historical perspective of schooling in California.

Smrerkar, Claire. *The Impact of School Choice and Community: In the Interest of Families and Schools*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

This book offers a response to the policy failures associated with parental involvement in schools by arguing against traditional, piecemeal approaches to enhancing parental involvement in schools and amplifying the importance of parents' social networks in the discussion of family-school partnerships. The interaction between social structure and school organization provides compelling indications of the need to recast the concept of parental involvement to one of community building.

Strong Families, Strong Schools. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Education, 1995.

Strong Families, Strong Schools is the national initiative to encourage and support efforts by families to take a more active role in their children's learning. This document supports with statistics and research the positive effects of family-school-community partnerships.

It also provides helpful strategies and descriptions of programs that are having positive effects on student achievement around the country. It addresses what families, schools, communities, businesses, and government can do to improve children's education. Some topics include how families can connect with their children; how partnerships for safe schools and improved learning can be formed; and how communities, businesses, and government can connect families and schools.

Swap, Susan McAllister. *Developing Home-School Partnerships: From Concepts to Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1993.

A key feature of this book is the research models of home-school partnerships presented by the author, which contribute greatly to understanding the types of parental involvement efforts and the reasons they do or do not work. The author proposes a partnership model as the most effective in producing better schools and successful learning for all students. Suggestions are made on how to implement a partnership model.

People and Organizations

For more information and assistance in establishing comprehensive parental involvement efforts and family-school compacts at a school or district level, please contact:

California Department of Education
Family and Community Partnerships Office
721 Capitol Mall, 3rd Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 653-3768

Susan Thompson, Administrator	(916) 653-3768
Mary Lu Graham, Consultant	(916) 657-3918
Carol Monroe, Consultant	(916) 653-4486
Maria Reyes, Consultant	(916) 653-4308

For further resources, contact the following organizations:

United States Department of Education Resources

Call 1-800-USA-LEARN

Internet: To subscribe, write "subscribe EDInfo first name last name" (without the quotation marks) in the body of an E-mail message and send it to: listproc@inet.ed.gov

Education Resource Information Center (ERIC)
ERIC operates 16 clearinghouses; telephone 1-800-LET-ERIC.